

Testimony of Sandra Mattavous-Frye

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**Before the
DC Council Committee of the Whole & Committee on
Transportation and the Environment**

**On Bill 23-0193
“Electric Vehicle Readiness Amendment Act of 2019”
December 9, 2019**

Greetings Chairman Mendelson, Chairperson Cheh, members of the Committee of the Whole and the Committee on Transportation and the Environment, for the record I am Sandra Mattavous-Frye, People’s Counsel for the District of Columbia. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on the Electric Vehicle Readiness Amendment Act of 2019. The purpose of my testimony is to offer OPC’s comments in response to the Electric Vehicle Readiness Amendment Act of 2019.

OPC commends the intent of the Council to facilitate the development and growth of an evolving electric vehicle infrastructure. However, OPC cautions the Council to conduct a comprehensive and thorough review of all potential consequences that could arise if the current legislation is passed as drafted. OPC is cognizant of the fact that

time is not on our side, however, rushing ahead without vetting all options could result in irreversible consequences that unintentionally countermand the goals we are trying to achieve.

OPC has served as a vigilant statutory representative for the District of Columbia ratepayers with respect to utility matters since its reestablishment in 1975. In fact, climate change, distributed energy resources and the promotion of conservation and energy efficiency has always been at the forefront of OPC's mission. OPC has actively participated in all environmental and energy related proceedings before the PSC, including Grid Modernization, Energy Efficiency, and Renewable Energy. We are also a statutory party to the SEU, the agency charged with developing energy efficiency programs for District consumers. We are currently participating in Formal Case 1130/1155 initiated by PSC to consider the impact of the rapid increase in of electric vehicles in the District and the potential role of the EV industry in achieving the District's ambitious Renewable Portfolio Standards. The PSC convened a working group in correlation with Formal Case 1130/1155; and directed the members to submit recommendations in

January 2020 to the Commission on such things as (1) a definition of what make ready infrastructure is; (2) potential places to site chargers; and (3) a plan for implementation of the partially approved Pepco Transportation Electrification Offerings. OPC respectfully urges the DC Council to allow the stakeholders to finish the comprehensive work that has already begun. Indeed, many of the issues the Council is considering are being addressed by the Working Group.

As other jurisdictions undergoing similar evolutions have found — there is no silver bullet to fostering an all-electric transportation future. An effective EV framework will allow for the balancing of numerous considerations such as decarbonization, grid optimization, interoperability, underserved communities, public interest, and the competitive market. In fact, several District agencies are tackling these very important issues, DOEE is working on a decarbonization roadmap to be published in 2020, the Commission is working diligently on grid optimization and the SEU has partnered with our utilities to optimize their footprint to maximize their energy efficiency measures in the District.

Because the movement towards an all-electric transportation system in the District is just one of many initiatives that is taking place in the process of achieving the District's climate goals, it is imperative that the Council thoroughly vet each initiatives' impact on all ratepayers and ask threshold questions. OPC offers that the Council should seek concrete answers to certain questions, such as:

- (i) whether it is necessary for the Council to engage in the matter presently;
- (ii) whether there is a competitive market already in existence that will provide such service by demand of the end users;
- (iii) whether the legislation will promote or thwart the competitive market;
- (iv) whether such an initiative place captive DC ratepayers, who may not own or have easy access to EVs, in an untenable financial situation;
- (v) whether the initiative has quantifiable and equitable benefits for all DC residents; and
- (vi) whether the costs associated with the implementation of the initiative causes discriminatory actions.

At this juncture, the District's population is relatively small compared to other jurisdictions. A smaller base will result in larger cost

subsidies for all consumers and lead to an unequitable energy burden on low and middle-income consumers. OPC submits we cannot continue to financially overburden residents. While OPC applauds the Council’s initiative in wanting to be an innovator in the EV arena and make charging infrastructure more accessible, there is already a thriving market meeting the existing EV needs of the District. In fact, Department of Energy and Environment (“DOEE”) explained in its Clean Energy DC Plan:

From a geographical perspective, the District covers a small, dense land area that makes public transit, cycling, and walking more accessible and attractive to citizens. *As a result, 37% of households do not own a vehicle—a number that is approximately twice the national average.* []¹

While OPC does not dispute that the District has an independent obligation to ensure that there is sufficient infrastructure to support an all-electric future, this obligation must account for actual electric vehicle ownership, usage and system dynamics. OPC voices its’ concerns of the unintended consequences of building owners being forced to allocate 20%

¹ See generally, District of Columbia Department of Energy & Environment, Clean Energy DC: The District of Columbia Climate and Clean Energy Action Plan, (“DC Clean Energy Plan”), August 2018, at 193 https://doee.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddoe/page_content/attachments/Clean%20Energy%20DC%20-%20Full%20Report_0.pdf

of their parking spaces for make ready infrastructure. The costs associated with allocating funds for such an initiative will no doubt be passed along to their tenants, who may not even own a vehicle. Further, the increase in rental costs further reduces affordable housing in the District. Additionally, parking spaces are at a premium in the District and holding potential spaces aside for future EVs that may not even exist in certain apartment buildings could cause loss of revenue for building owners who charge a monthly fee for parking. Notably, a vast majority of tenants use public transportation to travel to and from work and choose their apartment based on proximity to metro and bus services.

In closing, OPC will continue to support the Council and Commission in their efforts to ensure that there are equitable, affordable, and sustainable options for ratepayers as we seek to reach the District's Renewable Portfolio Standards. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.